BEECHCROFT:

An Experiment in Adult Education

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BEECHCROFT

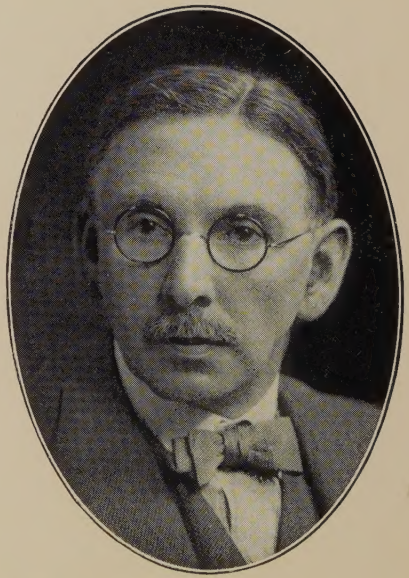
An Experiment in Adult Education

TO

ARNOLD S. ROWNTREE

WHOSE FAITH AND ENCOURAGEMENT

MADE THIS EXPERIMENT POSSIBLE



Cecile and Horace Fleming

372

BEECHCROFT

THE STORY OF THE BIRKENHEAD SETTLEMENT 1914-1924

An Experiment in Adult Education

by

HORACE FLEMING, M.A.

With a Foreword by

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and Master of Balliol College

THE
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THANKS

THIS account of an experiment in adult education tells only of concrete fact. Any attempt to describe the atmosphere of the institution would require a skill which I do not possess; but the story would be even less complete were not reference made to some of the friends who by counsel or by unswerving support helped to light the flame of life, or to keep it lit. Beechcroft owes much to Mrs. Edith J. Wilson, Professor P. M. Roxby, Miss F. A. Collie, Duncan R. Paton and P. W. Shone. Thanks also are due to T. A. Stephenson, R. Baker and F. W. Venables for voluntary administrative and other help.

I am also indebted to Dr. Edward Cadbury for assistance in publishing this book, to Miss Ruth Macdonald and Ernest E. Taylor for reading the manuscript, and to William Hazelton and J. H. Pafford for seeing it through the press.

Finally, gratitude must be expressed to my wife whose devotion transformed the bricks and mortar of an institution into the spiritual fabric of a home.

H.F.

150, Huntingdon Road,
Cambridge.
April, 1938.

CONTENTS

Chapter		*Page*
Foreword		9
Introduction		11
I	The Settlement Origin and Background. The House and its Setting. The Objective.	13
II	The Students The Nucleus. Organized Labour. Women. Youth.	24
III	The Curriculum The War. International Affairs. Local History. Drama. General.	41
IV	Informal Education The Community Spirit. Books and Reading. Social Activities.	57
V	Beechcroft and its Neighbours The Ministers' Fellowship. The Education Club. The Press.	66
VI	Social Service. The Students. The Unemployed. Housing. The Student Christian Movement.	73
VII	Administration Government. Finance. Organization and Records. Personnel.	82

Chapter *Page*

VIII Conclusion - - - - - - - 95
Growth through Experience. A Settlements Association. The Aim Restated.

Appendix - - - - - - - - - - 103
Weekly Programme of Classes for 1923-24, Specimen Programmes of Non-Grant earning Classes. Officers and Council. List of Lecturers.

Index - - - - - - - - - 116

ILLUSTRATIONS

Cecile and Horace Fleming - - - - *Frontispiece*

Line Drawing of Beechcroft - - - - *facing p.* 14

The King's Jewry, 1924 - - - - *facing p.* 49

Two Groups of Students - - - - *facing p.* 80

FOREWORD

I AM glad to have this chance to say something in preface to Horace Fleming's story of Beechcroft. It was worth telling. As the author says, the Educational Settlement was something new in Adult Education. It has proved to be more than that—a device for securing the continuance of invention and new ideas. The Tutorial Class was a great invention which in many ways revolutionized adult education. It was so important and so revolutionary that it rightly absorbed most of the attention and energy of those concerned in adult education. But all such social or educational inventions have limits to their usefulness. If a movement like the Adult Educational movement is to keep alive, it must be capable of inventing new ideas and meeting new demands. Energetic and active Tutorial Classes have often made some new experiments of their own but as a rule they are too isolated and too much concerned in their immediate and proper job to experiment in new ideas. The Educational Settlement can be, and is, a common centre for all kinds of classes. It can make more possible than can a single

class that community spirit and fellowship which is so vital in adult education, and it can give a continuity where the fruits of experience can be new ideas.

This is what strikes me most about the Educational Settlements I know best. They do not only do efficiently what has been done elsewhere. They do that, but they also continuously produce new ideas and new experiments. This story of Beechcroft is the story of continual experiment and invention. It is interesting enough merely as a record of such experiment. But Horace Fleming made Beechcroft something more significant, an example of how to continue inventiveness.

A. D. Lindsay.

INTRODUCTION

An Educational Settlement is a new type of institution designed to meet contemporary needs. Its work is so full of interest, touches life at so many points, and has proved to be of sufficient social significance to warrant its being more widely known. With this end in view, I have attempted an outline of my experience in one of the institutions which were the forerunners of the Educational Settlements Association.

I have known the working, from the inside, of two such Settlements, one at Birkenhead in the industrial north, the other in central London. This essay is the story of the former. It tells of pioneering days and ways, and indicates how, through trial and error, experience was gained which later was to bear fruit in other Settlements, and in the policy of the Association.

Our faith at Beechcroft, which was the name given to the Birkenhead centre, was (and it still is the faith of the Educational Settlements Association) that the solution of most of life's problems lies with education, and that the task of the modern Settlement is the quickening and developing of the personal life of the

individual and the social life of the community; the central purpose being growth, growth from the nascent to the mature.

As to the individual, an Educational Settlement stands for freedom and responsibility, the twin principles of an educated democracy. Believing in the potential worth of every man and woman, it aims at liberating this potentiality into the freedom of the world's best thought in whatever field, whether it be literature, economics, politics, philosophy or science, with the object of it gaining expression in life. This implies faith in the growing capacity of the individual and places the teacher in the position of guide and leader rather than instructor.

This quickening of the inner personal life is the primary but not the sole aim. The Educational Settlement seeks to raise the level of civic life by the energizing power of example, and by the influx of its members into the fields of active citizenship.

It is in the conviction that this type of institution is one reply to the challenge, "that Democracy has not, as yet, discovered its appropriate institutions", that the following account is placed on record.

CHAPTER I

THE SETTLEMENT

ORIGIN AND BACKGROUND

FORMERLY the name Settlement denoted a small colony of University men or women settled as residents in an institution situated among mean city streets. Education was sometimes introduced, but the chief activities were social investigation and social amelioration. The type of Settlement which Beechcroft represents, influenced to some extent by the Danish High School Movement, is concerned mainly with education in the hope that it may equip men and women to solve their own economic and social problems, and in the belief that behind all problems lies that of human personality. They also approach the subject of adult education from a particular angle as the following pages will disclose.

The interesting fact about Beechcroft therefore, is that the note it struck was new. It embodied ideas which since have been generally accepted, but which

in 1914 were first crystallized into experiment and fact. It was the first non-residential people's college to have a programme comprehensive enough to suit all types of student; to use methods based on the belief that everybody wanted education though they might fight shy of the word; and that every human interest can have educational value if only it be rightly directed.

It may be argued that in point of date Beechcroft was preceded by two Settlements now within the Educational Settlements group, and this would be true. Both St. Mary's at York and Swarthmore at Leeds were earlier in time, but reference to the syllabus of each for 1914 will reveal that Beechcroft was the first to become a community centre for adult education and to adopt the broad and comprehensive ideas which now constitute the policy of the Educational Settlements Association.

The claim of pioneer does not mean however, that Beechcroft sprang full orbed out of the void. It could not have emerged had not the local mental climate been prepared by earlier institutions of which Beechcroft was the heir. It was the last in a sequence of five, all having the same personal origin. The first of these, a Young Men's Guild, attached to a Church, was founded in 1903 and given up two years later as being too limited by its sectarian associations. Its members transferred to an Adult School which began with

Line drawing of Beechcroft
after the extension in 1919
by
J. W. Parkes

twenty members in October, 1905. It met on Sunday mornings at nine o'clock and had so vigorous a life that on its first anniversary the membership had increased to 110. This school, known as Oxton Road Adult School, established the contact with the University of Liverpool which since has been such a marked feature of adult education in Birkenhead and of Beechcroft in particular. It also created a consumers goodwill amongst the industrial population which greatly aided the succeeding institutions.

A year later, the Adult School was followed by a branch of the Workers' Educational Association, the two bodies running concurrently and consisting largely of the same membership. This branch of the Association rapidly developed from merely arranging public lectures to the organizing of University Tutorial Classes. The first of these began in 1909, one year later than the pioneer class at Rochdale, and was tutored by Professor P. M. Roxby, then lecturer in Geography at the University of Liverpool. Thirty-one students enrolled for a three years course in Modern Social Conditions. One of the W.E.A. classes was quite unusual in those days, its members being drawn entirely from one Trade Union, the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Enginemen and Firemen. This class began in 1913, one year before the opening of the Settlement.

Such in brief were the predecessors of Beechcroft, and qualities inherited from each are to be observed in its work. From the Adult Schools were taken ideas of flexibility and fellowship together with a less conventional and more realistic outlook both on education and religion. From the Workers' Education Association the Settlement learned rightly to value system, intellectual standards, and contact with statutory bodies. The engine-drivers' and firemen's class gave the clue to a method of approach to the Trade Unions. It is significant also, that the men and women who helped in creating the earlier movements were among those who laid the foundations of Beechcroft. In addition to this inheritance, Beechcroft had definite characteristics of its own. It not only provided local movements such as the Adult Schools, the W.E.A., the Trades and Labour Council, the Co-operative Education Committee, and the Liverpool and District Labour College groups with a habitation for their classes and lecture schools, and the two first with leaders; but was an institution with the friendly atmosphere of a home, the stimulus of a college common room, and the academic standard of a University. To these it added the idea of self-government as an important factor in educational method and as training for citizenship.

Furthermore, it adopted the method of modern

science in basing its educational structure on the facts as revealed by a survey of the Borough, and planned its curriculum on the individual or group interests of its students. It aimed also, without weakening the allegiance of the individual to his own particular group, at creating a loyalty wider than sect, party or class, the horizon of which was the good of the Settlement community as a whole. The Students' Association was one means through which the interplay of difference was made to serve the development of a community spirit. It was a merger which included representatives of every note in the religious, political and social octaves, all working together in a spirit of mutual respect for an end that comprehended them all.

Such were some of the ideas incarnated in Beechcroft when it was projected into the life of Birkenhead. Change has taken place since those early days. Experience has pruned some of the original ideas and made more clear the notions, often rather vague, as to the final orientation of the Settlement. The policy and method which finally developed were the result of long and often painful striving after educational truth and its relation to politics and religion, and the search after a workable conception of the place of a Settlement devoted to education in a world of other educational institutions and organizations.

Opened a month after war broke out, the work began in a time of difficulty. It is probable however, that the effort of steering a straight course amid the conflicting currents of local opinion in war time was excellent training and helped to shape the policy which since has been generally approved by the adult education movement. It did more; it enabled Beechcroft to make two discoveries of inestimable value: the generosity of its few financial friends and the devotion and self-sacrifice of its students. The former, alas too few, with the modesty of true saintliness were those whose left hand knows not what the right hand does; and the latter, too numerous to name, are of the company to whose creative ability Beechcroft is due.

THE HOUSE AND ITS SETTING

The original Beechcroft, which still forms part of the Settlement premises, is a fine old semi-detached Georgian house with circular hall and spiral stone staircase, standing in about 1,600 square yards of freehold land. Situated in what was becoming a down town part of the Borough, it was admirably suited by its geographical position and its architectural features for the work of

an educational institution. On the ground floor were two lecture rooms each capable for seating eighty or ninety people, and a committee room. The upper portion was the residence of the Warden and his family.

Purchase was effected, and money raised by interested friends for furnishing, just before the outbreak of war. Had that upheaval been foreseen it is possible the opening might have been postponed. The property having been acquired however, it seemed a clear duty to go forward in the belief that the work would justify itself. The soundness of this decision was quickly proved by the increase in student attendances, and in spite of the difficulties under which the Settlement was continued, events showed that a centre of this kind was one of the few places where the peculiar needs of war time could be met.

While the war made impossible many of the original plans, useful work was done, and the conflict itself gave birth to problems the attempted solution of which served to determine Beechcroft's future methods.

Birkenhead has a civic life equal to most Municipal Boroughs, and a large proportion of its 150,000 population work in the shipyards of Messrs. Cammell Laird. In the industrial section of the town war time conditions were reflected in its social life; congested districts, bad housing, and the absence of ethical influences. During the first few years of Beechcroft's

life, the public reading-rooms were closed, and 3,000 of the elementary school children roamed the streets for half of each day owing to the schools having been let to the military authorities.

At one end of the labour scale, overwork and strain drove men to seek relief in drink and low forms of amusement, and ambition was limited to a rise in wages. At the other end were highly paid and skilled men: men who knew that Labour had political power, but was incapable of its wise use. These were the men anxious to equip themselves for leadership so that catastrophe might be prevented and evolutionary progress rightly guided.

Against such background was the setting of Beechcroft, and the question at its birth was how to reach, how touch the heart and mind of this large industrial population.

THE OBJECTIVE

Beechcroft opened its doors on the 26th of September, 1914, the ceremony being performed by the late Tom Bryan, M.A., Warden of Fircroft College for Working Men, the late Sir Alfred Dale, Vice Chancellor of the University of Liverpool, the Mayor of Birkenhead, the

Secretary of the local Trades and Labour Council, and the Warden of the Liverpool University Settlement. Thus from the start was emphasis given to the sort of contacts it was hoped to encourage.

The aim of the new institution was not then as concrete as it subsequently became. It was hoped to incorporate the best elements of the earlier movements, mellowed by the experience gained, with the addition of a feature which was felt to be essential to adult education, a permanent centre which to its members would be both university and club. This feature had several aspects. The centre should house a vigorous common life; its educational method should find expression in a flexible curriculum wide enough to cover a variety of interests and meet the needs of many types of people whatever the level of their intellectual attainment. Its policy should include self-government and so help to train its members for active and responsible citizenship; and its purpose should comprise the enabling of men and women to see beyond the labels of party, sect, or class, to the human spirit behind, and should lead to the conception of the common good in every department of life.

There is definite educational value in an institution where people of differing interests, temperaments and ages share in a common social life; and while to-day it is hardly necessary to plead the educational superiority

of the permanent centre above that of the single ephemeral class, it is essential that, within these centres, there shall be the community spirit, together with freedom to experiment, especially in informal work.

The value of the permanent centre has been stated with finality by the Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education in its Report on Pioneer Work, Paper No. 9, 1929:

"In our view the extension of adult education can be most fruitfully considered . . . (by) providing not merely lecture rooms, but premises where adult education has a chance of taking the form of community life, the activities being carried on by the members themselves, with an expert in the background ready to provide inspiration, guidance and advice. We regard this as a central characteristic in all forms of adult education."

The hope is that work of this kind may extend. Democracy holds in its hands the keys of its own destiny, and while he would be a bold person who would prophesy as to the verdict of history, the omens are favourable. A people that have evolved and controlled movements such as the Adult Schools, the Workers' Educational Association, the Trade Unions and the Co-operative Movement, can do even greater things. If any new social order inaugurated is to be

worthy of the spirit of man, it will need pioneers, thinkers, teachers and workers on its behalf, and these can only emerge out of a widespread system of adult education.

CHAPTER II

THE STUDENTS

THE NUCLEUS

HAD the advice been followed of some who were interested in the founding of the Settlement, the opening of Beechcroft would have been postponed four years. The length of the war was not visualized when we decided to launch out, but events proved that we were right.

The field waiting to be tilled had been surveyed and something of its needs were known. If members of the Trade Unions and the Co-operative Guilds were prevented from class attendance by military service or by overtime in the shipyard, we at least were certain of the support of the local movements we had been the means of initiating. These would provide a student nucleus whose educational needs would exercise the energies of the Settlement until peacetime returned. That faith was more than justified. The student membership increased more rapidly than was anticipated.

The supporting movements were two; the Adult Schools and the Workers' Educational Association, neither of which possessed rooms in which to meet, use being made of Borough Council schools or Church premises. Apart from gatherings in a private house, there was no opportunity for developing anything in the nature of a college spirit. This deficiency Beechcroft set itself to overcome.

On the Adult School side, the number of schools had increased considerably. Members from Oxton Road School had hived away from the parent to start other schools, and these in turn had given rise to a local Federation: the Mersey District Adult School Union. A leader's preparation class was initiated to feed these various units, evening classes organized for the pooled membership, and a room set aside for committee meetings. The Workers' Educational Association found at the new institution a central meeting place, and three of its classes moved from Council School premises to Beechcroft. One of these was the class for locomotive enginemen and firemen which, tutored by myself, could only meet on Sundays by reason of the members' occupation, and even then many of them came to the class straight from work on the night shift.

There was some difficulty at first in getting academic sanction for a class to meet on Sundays, the idea then

apparently being novel, but eventually the authorities gave way and the class was recognized.

In the second session, the largest local men's Adult School moved its location to the Settlement and thus began a new trend. By the following winter there were four Adult Schools meeting in the building, and by 1920 the number had risen to six. Beechcroft had practically become the home of the local Adult School organization.

So much for the nucleus. It was merely a beginning. On the looking back two things come into mind: one satisfactory, the other, in recollection, amusing. The first is the remembrance of a splendid band of workers who, trained in one or other of these earlier movements, provided a core of membership for the new venture; the other is the anxiety which accompanied each experiment in class or subject made in the attempt to win the wider public. Often at nights my wife and I would lie awake wondering whether there would be an audience for the teacher, or lecturer, who was making his first appearance on the following day. In this connexion, it is a pleasure to be able to state that in no case during the ten years do I remember the non-arrival of a lecturer, or substitute, and they were by no means all local people.

ORGANIZED LABOUR

Serving existing movements may have been useful work, but it was not primarily that for which Beechcroft was founded. The fringe of the industrial population was barely touched. Obviously the immediate concern was to find some method of contact with the 12,000 members of the Trade Unions the majority of whom were engaged in the shipbuilding industry.

The locomotive enginemen and firemen's class showed a possible line of approach. It will be noted that we were thinking in terms of group organization, a method gradually to be discarded as time went on. A visit to the Trades and Labour Council was the first step, and there an opportunity was given me of speaking on the aims of Beechcroft. These evidently met with acceptance as the members present undertook to arrange similar visits to all the Trade Union branches in the town. With the help of Mr. Egan, Secretary to the Council, fourteen of these were visited and I spoke on the value of adult education. In each instance, the reception was cordial and promises of support were unanimous.

But while these meetings were enthusiastic, response in terms of individual students was small. Certainly, a second group of railwaymen, this time the N.U.R., had

agreed to a class for their own members, but time was passing and the process of getting into touch with each of the seventy-one Unions was slow. Some more expeditious method had to be found. Instead of using the Trades Council as a means of contact with its constituent Unions I decided, therefore, to consider the Council as an end in itself. Its composition was representative of all the Unions, and if these leaders could be equipped it was hoped that through them the whole of the local Trade Union movement might be fertilized.

The educational method adopted was that of the one-day lecture school, and the first of these, arranged specially for members of the Trades Council, was held on Sunday, May 20th, 1915. Two lectures were given, one in the afternoon the other in the evening, and these were sandwiched with tea and a sing-song. The lecturer was A. E. Zimmern who spoke on Democracy and the War, and the chairmen were the President and Secretary of the Trades Council respectively. This experiment was the beginning of a successful series of similar schools, which, meeting about six times each session, continued until the winter of 1919 when they were replaced by a more formal type of educational organization. They were four valuable years, as succeeding events were to prove, and the quality of the tuition may be indicated by the names of some of the

lecturers who in those formative days voluntarily gave their help. They included J. A. Hobson, G. D. H. Cole, Dr. Ernest Barker, Arthur Greenwood, William Mellor, Professor Oliver Elton, Professor Gonner, Dr. F. H. Spencer, A. N. Shimmin, Professor P. M. Roxby and Professor Fred Hall.

These one-day schools broke new ground in Birkenhead, and within this method there was an interesting trend of development. In the earliest stage, schools were arranged separately for the Trades Council, the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Enginemen and Firemen, the National Union of Railwaymen, and the Education Committee of the Co-operative Society. In each case the experiment was novel, and opened up fresh horizons for the members, one result being that the separate schools gave way to joint schools the membership of which was drawn from all these organizations. They were now ready to share in a common enterprise.

The method which ultimately proved to be most effective with this type of student was One Year courses of lectures on Local Government. The first of these, given during the winter of 1915-16 by J. J. Clarke of the University of Liverpool, attracted several of the Trades Union leaders who had attended the one-day lecture schools, the result being that the new course included amongst its members one Alderman,

three Borough Councillors, and several Trade Union organizers. The subject turned out to be so appropriate, the attendance so constant, and the interest so lively, that an unmistakable clue for future development was provided.

In the following session this class met in the Trades Council's own rooms, an arrangement which meant that the attendances were confined to members of that body. The educational effectiveness of the plan will be granted when I state that of its members, eighteen became Borough Councillors, four filled the office of Mayor, and eight became Justices of the Peace. Two of the member's wives became Guardians of the Poor.

These men were genuinely appreciative of any effort made on their behalf. They elected me an honorary member of the Trades Council, and both Mr. Clarke and I were recipients of presentations in April, 1917. I think also, that I must be one of very few laymen who have presided over a Trade Union branch meeting, the occasion being a meeting of the Amalgamated Society of Locomotivemen and Firemen which was addressed by their District Secretary.

The following extracts from two annual reports of the Trades Council illustrate the friendly relationship that existed between it and Beechcroft:—

"In connexion with the education of working men and women, a Settlement House was opened during the past year. The Hon. Warden, Mr. H. Fleming, attended the Council with a view to interesting Trade Unions in the project. The delegates received Mr. Fleming very cordially and agreed to lay the Settlement schemes before the Unions. It was further decided that Mr. Fleming should make a tour of the Unions and confer with the members at first hand. In his later report he says that while the Settlement is progressing satisfactorily, he is not satisfied that the Trade Unions are making as good use of it as they might. . . . I would earnestly appeal to those Unions who have promised to interest themselves in the Beechcroft scheme to do so at once, for we need all the education and philosophy we can acquire to meet the problems of the immediate future."

This was in the Report of 1914-15. Two years later there appeared the following:—

"Under the auspices of the Council another excellent series of Sunday Lecture Schools were held at the Settlement. The subjects selected for discussion dealt with present and future industrial and social problems, while as lecturers we had the advice and opinions of some of the best thinkers in public life. That the lectures were of great value is amply demonstrated by the intelligent criticism and broader outlook our members have displayed during the past session, and we certainly are better equipped to meet the difficulties which lie in the near future."

WOMEN

From its earliest days Beechcroft was successful in attracting women. On looking back, several considerations seem to have been in mind when we began planning for this constituency. There were the sources of student supply: these needed to be ascertained, and a method found of tapping those sources. There was the programme: what subjects would interest and hold women students. It was important also, to find a method of progressive advance so that the subjects studied might become more intensive in treatment and the process of education rise gradually from elementary to higher ranges of study. There was the danger too, which we were anxious to avoid, of the women students becoming an island universe in the Settlement instead of being merged in the general life of the place. Another point was the necessity for finding suitable outlets for the practical expression of the new ideas arising out of the women's classes, and finally, there was the Settlement building: how could this both decoratively and in social atmosphere be made to speak to a sense of taste as yet unawakened and a capacity for friendship not yet developed.

The question of how to get into touch with the type of woman who wanted more than a gossip over a cup of

tea had occupied our minds for some time. A Women's Adult School had done some preliminary educational work, and a number of its keener spirits had joined a course of lectures arranged by the Workers' Educational Association, but this was not meeting the problem. Here was the Settlement unoccupied during the afternoons, while outside its walls were crowds of working class women for whose educational needs no one was catering.

As a beginning, my wife, who organized the women's classes for the first four years, visited the local Women's Co-operative Guilds and gained the interest of a large number of their members. Our men students were persuaded to encourage their wives to attend, and appeals were made through the local press. The result exceeded anticipation. Fourteen study circles were organized during that first winter, five each in the two first terms and four in the summer term. A charge was made of one penny per meeting.

It was at once discovered that working mothers could not attend study groups unless provision were made for the care of their babies. A nursery was opened to which friends gave toys, and experienced voluntary workers looked after the children. A Day Nursery may not have been original in 1914, but possibly this was the first in connexion with the education of women.

The programme was the second difficulty. The average Church had solved the problem of its Mother's Meeting. Its method was traditional and practically universal; but no one knew what sort of an educational curriculum would interest women with no background other than working class experience, an experience that was more often bitter than not. Illumination was not long delayed.

The study circle method was chosen as being the least formal, and these groups were arranged in short courses with plenty of variety in choice of subject. History and Literature proved to be popular, but whatever the subject we found it of the utmost importance to frame the title suitably and arrange an attractive line of approach. The personal popularity of the tutor was also a leading factor in the success of a class.

Practical subjects were welcomed: Home Nursing and Ambulance, Economical Cookery, Our Bodily Organs in Health and Sickness, etc., all attracting good attendances. A list of the more successful subjects appears in the Appendix.

The satisfactory nature of this work among women won commendation in the following paragraph from the famous Report on Adult Education, published by the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1919:—

"Beechcroft (Birkenhead) has done more educational work than any other Settlement of which we have received Report, but it differs from most in having been founded with a definite educational object, so that the work is really more akin to the various peoples' colleges than to the usual type of Settlement. From 150 to 200 women, mostly of the working class, attend its classes and lectures. Study Circles in a large variety of subjects are held, as well as a University Tutorial Class for women, which is steadily recruited from the members of the Study Circles. A nursery for the children of mothers attending the classes which is a feature of the Settlement has been found to meet a very real need."

In beginning with the study circle method our hope was twofold: that it would stimulate the interest of members in things of the mind, and would prepare the way for classes of a more intensive character. As to the first, the attendance figures are given in the Appendix, and of the second, subsequent history gives ground for satisfaction. For example, the wide range of subjects with which we began were arranged in short courses, but by the session of 1919, the fourteen subjects of the first year were reduced to three, and the period of study extended from four meetings to eight. Moreover, the way was being prepared for statutory classes of which, strangely enough, the first was one in French, soon to be followed by one in the poetry of Browning. The French class to begin with was an informal afternoon class for women, later, a second

class was held in the evenings with an opportunity given also to men to join, and finally, both were merged in a mixed evening class under the auspices of the Local Education Authority.

It did not take long to discover that women were as ready for education as were men, but we had yet to ascertain whether they would be open to the criticism, so often levelled at students of higher education classes, of becoming self centred. From our experience the reverse was the truth. Women, in fact, proved to be quite as socially minded as men. The prevailing impression may have gained credence from the fact that while men look to giving expression to their new knowledge through the traditional channels of Trade Union activity, women have no such ready-made opportunity. They have to seek for outlets: find them our members successfully did.

During the second session they organized a series of teas for wounded soldiers, each gathering including a musical programme. Raising funds for the Settlement became a concern of theirs also; a concern to which they brought much originality and ingenuity. Again, when the time arrived for the introduction of open air plays, the women students devoted the summer term to the making of costumes, hand properties and like. How valuable an educational feature this became may be gathered from the chapter on Drama.

The last feature to which reference need be made is that education, in our view, was not limited to organized class, study circle, or indeed book knowledge of any kind. The aim certainly was to make each study group become progressively higher in standard, but educational value was expected from every activity that went on in the Settlement, whether it be the conduct of a committee meeting, the arranging and decoration of a class room, or the laying of a table for a social gathering. From observations in the homes of some of the students we soon discovered that ideas of neatness, simplicity and taste had been learned and "inwardly digested."

YOUTH

The idea that Beechcroft should be an educational centre for adults only was modified quite early in its history. Almost against its will the Settlement was forced to make provision for the young life that thronged its portals. The story of its beginning may not be without interest.

Early in 1918 I was approached by a group of young men whose ages ranged from 17 to 20, with a request for the loan of a room one evening a week for the purpose of selecting their football team for the succeeding Saturday. I agreed. After a week or two had

elapsed, I tackled them on their knowledge of the game, getting the obvious reply that they knew all about it as they played it. With a suggestion of doubt about this in my voice, I asked whether they would like to hear a friend who played for the county speak on the theory of the game. The bait of a county player was too tempting to be refused, and when the speaker arrived the room was packed. Nearly every one present took part in the discussion which followed the talk, and this by arrangement did not finish that evening. The speaker came the two succeeding weeks, and at the close of the third meeting the youths were asked whether the talks had been satisfactory. The reply was a thunderous affirmative. The opening then was clear. Innocently I inquired whether there were not other subjects about which we ought to have more knowledge. After some seconds of dead silence one courageous youth suggested a topic. This was written on the blackboard. The ice once broken, the flow began and in less than twenty minutes both sides of the board were filled. I suggested a revision as the list was too long. Eventually about one sixth of the topics were underlined as being of immediate importance, and I then said: "There is your programme for the session; form your committee, appoint your officers and frame your rules of membership, then let me know the order in which you would like the subjects taken and I will

help with speakers." Such was the beginning of the Young Men's Club which continued during the whole of my Wardenship, and which supplied from its members many of the most responsible students in the Settlement.

In their second winter, these youths formed and successfully managed a club for younger boys for whom they arranged the programme and invited the speakers. The following paragraph from the annual Report of the Settlement for 1924 shows their helpfulness:—

"One of the most encouraging features in the work of the Settlement lies in the increasing interest taken by the young men in its various activities. Some have begun attending meetings of the adult Discussion Club, while others have joined dramatic and singing classes. Many make good use of the library, and a few serve on the committee of the Students' Association. They have come to take a pride in the Settlement, and have gladly given time and labour when there were things to be done. Appeals for their co-operation have been numerous and the response has been unfailing. Some are trained craftsmen who have given of their skill in the constructional work and scenic preparation required for the summer pageant plays. Another interesting sign is that the young men themselves are suggesting improvements in their syllabus. For example, they are asking for greater continuity in the subjects of discussion, and in some cases for definite courses of study. The members of the Club are not unmindful that, as they hope to recruit Beechcroft, so their own Club must be recruited from the boys below."

In the autumn of 1922, some of the unemployed men in the town became very concerned about their children who, coming from overcrowded homes, were running wild in the streets. They inquired whether we could arrange anything for their boys on Sundays. The result was a junior boy's school on Sunday mornings, and this, shortly afterwards was paralleled with a girl's Fellowship on Tuesday evenings.

It will be observed that no difficulty was experienced in getting boys and girls to the Settlement; but this does not mean that we had solved the educational problem of the adolescent. The place and its opportunities gripped and held them; a few of the brighter ones joined adult classes and rose to positions of responsibility in the Settlement, but while the school leaving age remains low the problem will be difficult.

CHAPTER III

THE CURRICULUM

THE WAR

WHATEVER difficulty there may have been in arranging the first winter's curriculum, there was one subject about which there was not the least doubt. Every person coming to the Settlement seemed interested in the political and economic causes of the War, and wished to know more about the social conditions of the belligerents. This became the central feature round which other subjects were easily grouped. It helped to determine and shape the programmes of the following few years. European history, geography and politics were studied and discussed in lecture school and class. The weekly public lectures and debates took a similar line, and women members of the study circles were equally interested. University Extension Courses made known the countries, peoples and problems comprehended by the conflict: indeed the Settlement might almost have been considered a department of the

University of Liverpool, so generous was the voluntary help given by members of its staff during those years.

On the other hand, the War increased the difficulties of students' attendance. Each year, more and more men were being called up, and those remaining were finding overtime becoming more severe. It was not until the War was over that we were to learn the extent of our normal support.

More important than numbers however, was the fact that Beechcroft was becoming recognized as the local people's college, and letters from the front testified to the high place it was taking in the affections of its members. The following is one of many:—

From Private Robert Herd (a member of the A.S.L.E. & F. class). Somewhere in France.

> "Looking back, I feel confident that had each town in England and Germany such an institution as Beechcroft during the past ten years, the world would have been much different to what it is at the present time."

Temporary extra-mural work by the Settlement was another feature of the War years. The Commanding Officers of the various local Barracks were reminded by letter of the War Office suggestion that in addition to the usual concerts, lectures should be provided for

the men in training. An offer was made to submit a list of appropriate subjects and lecturers, and in each case the reply was favourable. The first programmes were as follows:—

Laird Street Barracks:	
The Geography of Europe	P. M. Roxby, B.A.
The Battleground in Belgium	G. W. Coopland, M.A., D.Litt.
The German Soldier	Prof. W. E. Collinson.
The Map of Europe	A. Angelbeck, M.A.
The Strategy of Marlborough	Theo. Williams, M.A.
Waterloo	Theo. Williams, M.A.
Prenton Schools:	
Marlborough and Blenheim	Theo. Williams, M.A.
Waterloo (Two talks)	Theo. Williams, M.A.
St. Bede's Schools:	
The European Crisis	Evan Hughes, M.A.

The arrangements made in 1914 for men in training were repeated four years later for wounded soldiers, this time at the request of the officer in charge locally of the Army Education Scheme. That the army authorities should turn to Beechcroft as being a likely institution to meet the situation was gratifying. University help was again generous, and the response of the men was touchingly appreciative. Musical teas were provided for these convalescents, but reference to this will be found elsewhere.

This work arising directly out of the War was one side of the picture; there was another. The upheaval brought some curious experiences. The work of an educational Settlement then being something new, and the general public being always suspicious of what it does not understand, resulted in the institution being strongly criticized. Fortunately, this came from the two opposite sides. I say fortunately, for as right wing enthusiasts stated we were a pro-German centre, and left wing extremists declared we were a government agency, we ourselves took comfort from the thought that our keel must be fairly even.

It was amazingly difficult to convince people that we were out for no political end and were concerned only with education. When Sir Alfred Zimmern, then Mr. A. E. Zimmern, was advertised to address the first Trades Council lecture school in 1915, we were threatened that if he came our windows would all be broken. The lectures were delivered as announced, however, and the windows survived. On other occasions, when the visiting speaker was new to the town and his views not known to the authorities, we were often favoured with the presence of a plain clothes police officer among the audience.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Interest in subjects arising out of the War was one thing; the prevention of future wars quite another. We had long been convinced that the only dependable basis for world peace was international understanding and friendship, but the expression of this desirable aim in terms of a curriculum was not so clear. A beginning was made, certainly, but it was not until nine years later that we thought our peak point reached.

Three appropriate items appear in the programme of the first session: a University Extension Course on the Geography and History of Modern Europe; a series of lectures on Social Movements in Europe; and lastly, under the auspices of the Council for the Study of International Relations, a thirteen weeks' course on the Foundations of National Greatness.

Each succeeding winter saw some development. Attendances at classes in this branch of subject showed an annual increase. In 1917 we were fortunate in getting to the Settlement several lecturers who had made reputations as international publicists. These were G. Lowes Dickinson, Leonard S. Wolf, H. N. Brailsford, D. Mitrany and Professor A. J. Grant.

During these early years efforts were confined to widening the area of interest of Settlement students by

bringing visiting lecturers to the institution. From 1923, the work became more centrifugal. A request to the Frederik Merttens Trust was successful in obtaining for an experimental year the services of a resident staff lecturer in International Affairs. John S. Stephens, M.A., was appointed, and he brought to his task a wide experience of both Germany and France, and an extensive knowledge of European politics. Under this appointment the Settlement while remaining a centre for intra-mural teaching, was able to act as a base from which extra-mural lectures were organized for a territory which extended as far as Manchester.

On the other hand, we were possibly behind our colleagues in other Settlements in the search for foreign ties of individual friendship. It was not until 1923 that our first organized party of students went abroad. This visit was to Germany, the students living in the houses of German workers. This was followed by a long line of similar visits to the nearer countries of Europe.

LOCAL HISTORY

Local History lies at the opposite end of the scale to International Affairs, and while to-day it may be a

reasonably popular subject of study for adult students it was not, in the infant days of Beechcroft, the kind of bait to evoke working class interest; or so it seemed to us.

An institutional survey of the Borough had been made prior to the opening of the Settlement and a year or two later, a group of students had helped in an inquiry into housing and other social conditions, but these had not resulted in any organized study.

Stimulus came from the Liverpool and District Regional Survey Association which had been originated by Professor P. M. Roxby of the University. This Association had prepared a unique series of population maps of Wirral commencing with the Doomsday period, and in 1921 it was arranged that an exhibition of these with appropriate lectures should be held at the Settlement. The exhibit awakened a strong local interest which came to birth as the Birkenhead and Wirral Local History Society. It was fortunate in its officers whose names appear as lecturing in the first winter's programme. This programme may serve as indicating the scope of the ground covered, and is appended:—

Old Wirral	W. Ferguson Irvine, M.A.
Old Birkenhead	W. Ferguson Irvine, M.A.
Roads, with special reference to Wirral	C. O. Stallybrass, M.D.

The Geology of Wirral	W. Hewitt, B.Sc.
The Imminent congestion of Wirral	E. H. Rideout, B.Sc.
Coast Erosion: will Wirral be submerged?	E. H. Rideout, B.Sc.
Architectural features of Birkenhead	H. T. White
The Flora and Fauna of Wirral	C. Theodore Green, M.D.
Shotwick Castle and Church	R. W. S. McAlpine, B.A.

The introduction of this subject to the curriculum soon proved its wisdom. Students, many of them for the first time, learned that the locality in which they lived was bound up with the history of England by many links: through its roads with the Romans; through its place names with the Scandinavian invaders of the Dark Ages; and through its architecture with the ecclesiastical history of the Middle Ages. It opened up, also, questions of wider import than the immediate problems of civic government: questions such as proximity to the sea with its danger of coast erosion, and nearness to Liverpool with its resulting possibility of population congestion.

Educationally, it was a success.

The King's Jewry, 1924 (see pp. 50 - 52)

DRAMA

There are large numbers of people who would shy at an invitation to join a three year Tutorial Class, or even a class for one year, but would respond to an opportunity to take part in play acting. We had not been long in adult education before discovering how universal is the appeal of drama. It was another illustration of a truth which soon was to become axiomatic: that the first duty of an educator engaged in pioneer work lies in the provision of an interest along which the individual can be guided until it reaches an educational level.

Progress in drama at Beechcroft took about six years to reach full fruition. Its history may be described as a movement from play reading groups and occasional class plays to drama as a whole term's project.

It was in our second session that play reading first appeared in the programme, and during that winter also, members of one or other of the literature classes gave performances of scenes from Shakespeare. During this and the following few sessions our energies were limited to the choosing of plays for the reading groups, and to getting the best possible out of the class productions in the smallish rooms at our disposal.

The next step was an invitation to Mr. and Mrs.

Herbert Prentice, who were doing some unusually good dramatic work at Sheffield, to visit the Settlement and speak to the students. The need of a suitable hall, however, prevented advance along their lines. Some other method had to be found. If we had no theatre, as then we had not, we at least possessed a garden.

The result was a Shakespeare Pageant in the open air in the summer of 1921. For a first attempt it was a good show. Its chief feature was the revelation of unexpected dramatic and practical capacity in both men and women. The costumes were made on the premises by the women students while the men constructed the Elizabethan village which served as a setting for the Pageant. Over 900 spectators came to see the performance, and from that experience our future plans became clear.

In the following year, our intention of going one better was aided by a visit from J. W. Parkes of Hertford College, Oxford, who wrote for us a Pageant Play of English Literature. This had a cast of 140 players, and the research into period costumes and customs, the designing and making of dresses, and the constructional woodwork, all done by students, provided an educational six weeks prior to production.

Our full dramatic stride appeared to be reached with the out of doors production of Halcott Glover's plays, Wat Tyler in 1923, and The King's Jewry in

1924. Mr. Glover rewrote one of the scenes for the former occasion, and for the latter visited Beechcroft and lectured to the students on the historical background of the play. The number of players in each of these two plays was 150, too large a cast for the average amateur stage, but quite possible on a large lawn. The acting was of high quality. The King's Jewry as a play was more subtle and called for less broad effects than Wat Tyler, but the players made it noble and convincing in presentation. The great feature of the latter play was the wonderful beauty of the whole: the stage setting, the costumes, and above all the movement of the entire production. The producer's conception of the play as a pageant play was highly original, and a unity was attained in the different sides of the work which made it perfect as a spectacle.

As in previous productions, the public performances were by no means the only feature. The whole of the summer term was devoted to preparation, only more highly organized than previously. Lectures were given on the history of the time. Research was undertaken by one group of students into the dress, social habits, games and weapons of the period. Another group prepared sketches in colour of the costumes. Others dyed the materials, or cut out and made them up. Hand properties, such as drinking horns, leather bottles, quivers, and the necessary weapons were

allotted to other groups, while baskets and straw hats were made from rushes and willows gathered in Wirral. All this was the work of women, but the men were not idle. They undertook all woodwork required for scenic effects, including London Bridge. They also prepared and put together temporary seating accommodation for several hundred of the expected audience. Altogether, it was a term of happy activity, and while for psychological reasons the working or research groups were called committees rather than classes, the attendances were as regular and the work as intense as at the classes in any art or technical school.

In addition to learning by doing, the literary and critical aspects of drama were not neglected. Lectures on the Contribution of the Drama to Contemporary Thought, were given fortnightly throughout the session, and members of the class met weekly for the purpose of reading the plays selected for discussion. The Plays discussed were the following:—

Androcles and the Lion	Shaw.
Bill of Divorcement,	Clemence Dane.
Loyalties,	Galsworthy.
Waste,	Granville Barker.
R.U.R.	Capek.
Mixed Marriage,	St. John Ervine.
The Skin Game,	Galsworthy.
The Cloister,	Verhaeren.
Major Barbara,	Shaw.

The Well of the Saints,	Synge.
Strife,	Galsworthy.
The Machine Wreckers,	Ernst Toller.

The year 1924 also saw the opening of the little theatre, which was built in the grounds of the Settlement, and the formation of the Beechcroft Players. The Settlement was now equipped for dramatic work either on an indoor stage, or an outdoor lawn, with both players and audience having reached a level of critical insight that demanded a high standard of play and production.

So much for our experience of drama at Beechcroft. There are yet one or two things to be mentioned, however. The first is that drama was found to be an excellent gateway to other subjects. I have shown how it led to crafts of various kinds. Students of another type found their way, through the reading and discussion of plays, to other forms of literature, proving that a mental interest once quickened may welcome subjects which formerly failed to awaken response. The second is that while it is generally true in adult education that one must begin at the point where the mind of the student is alive, credit must also be given to the born tutor who, by the magnetism of his or her personality, secures allegiance and a devoted following. The producer responsible for these early plays was such a tutor.

GENERAL

In considering the curriculum we have been concerned so far with subjects which arose out of the condition of the times or the nature of the environment, or with subjects, like drama, of universal interest. The needs of the average student have yet to be discussed and some indication given as to how the syllabus was framed to meet them. It should be remembered that in no session during the ten years was there any hard and fast programme of subjects into which the new student had to fit. Roughly, it may be stated that the method had three stages.

The first, when the new-comer, attracted to the Settlement by some particular feature, or by some individual, found himself in an atmosphere where he could expand with confidence, where his first attempts at self-expression were met with sympathy and understanding, and where he found that tolerance combined with intellectual honesty which, while hard of attainment, is essential to real fellowship.

The next saw the individual gravitating experimentally to some existing group or line of study where he might or might not find what he wanted. The latter was often the case, and the search was continued until by a process of elimination his real need was discovered,

only to find, perhaps, that it was one for which no provision had been made.

Crystallization into a concrete demand was the final stage: a group was formed, was fostered by the staff, and if the interest shown seemed likely to have seeds of permanence, a plan of work was mapped out, and a formal class came into being.

While this ended the process for the student, it was not so for the administration. There was still the type of class to be determined. Should it be a three year Tutorial Class under the auspices of the University Joint Committee who would be responsible for the tutor, or should it be a one year or terminal class with a tutor appointed by the Settlement? In either of the latter cases, a decision must be made as to whether the class is suitable for a grant, or whether it shall be on a voluntary basis, and if the former, whether application shall be made to the Board of Education or to the Local Education Authority. This will be determined by the kind of subject and the educational stage of the students.

As an entrance to the world of mind, reference has already been made to drama, but any informal class can have its uses in this connexion. One found to be particularly suitable at Beechcroft was the Discussion class. This began with a series of unconnected talks becoming each year more systematized until finally it

emerged as an organized course. The class was extremely popular from the commencement, and was made additionally valuable by the help of the late Dr. Stanley A. Mellor who, in the midst of a busy life, gave it much time and thought.

The complete syllabus for the Settlement for the session of 1923-24 consisted of two University Tutorial classes, eleven One Year classes, five special courses of lectures, three craft classes, five groups for informal study, four week-end lecture schools, a weekly series of public lectures, two sets of dramatic rehearsals, and six Adult Schools. Of these thirty-seven weekly items, nine were grant earning, the remainder being under the financial responsibility of the Settlement. The total number of meetings for the year was 804, with an aggregate student attendance of 20,221.

The subject range was varied and included, Modern European Politics, the Economics of Unemployment, Social Psychology, Musical Appreciation, Singing, French, Esperanto, Play Reading, Dramatics and Diction, Local History, Poetry, Education, Photography and Sewing, etc.

CHAPTER IV

INFORMAL EDUCATION

THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT

One advantage possessed by a permanent educational centre is that it enables many kinds of activity to be pursued which result in the breaking down of barriers, dispelling prejudices, and widening the interests of the self-centred. It is to effort of this nature that I refer in this chapter when using the term informal education, and not to classes of the non-grant earning type.

The Community Spirit may be cited as an illustration. It is a phrase much in use in Educational Settlements, and refers to smoothness and friendliness of the human relationships within the institution. It is an educational product and its creation requires both patience and tact. The civic community of any town is one only in name, and in this respect Birkenhead was no better than the rest. Its party, sect and class fragmentations were represented in the student life of

Beechcroft, and our job was to harmonize them. Nowhere are these divisions more sharply marked than in the industrial labour group. Political and religious labels hide the worth of men and women from each other. Badge is often more important than life. The reversal of this order, and the making of the label secondary was our task. As to our method, three illustrations will serve.

The first concerns railwaymen students of whom there were two sets; engine drivers and firemen on the one hand, and guards and porters on the other. These men, representing the two ends of a train, hostile in their Trade Unions (one a craft, the other an industrial Union) attended classes at Beechcroft. Both were studying the same subject, and their classes were held at the same hour on Sunday afternoons; but they would not meet together. Their class rooms were separate. One Sunday, a deputation from one body visited the other with the suggestion of a joint lecture school. The school was held and was the first of several; but on that Sunday of the deputation we felt a new educational level had been reached.

The deepest cleavage however, appeared to exist between two educational bodies the Workers' Educational Association and the Labour College groups. Beechcroft, at that time, was the only institution in England where these rival associations held classes

under the same roof. To get them together in the same room was an undreamt of proposal. How was the gulf separating these two sets of excellent people to be bridged? Our first success was a debate in November, 1920, in which members of the two bodies were ranged on the same side defending Beechcroft against a common enemy, the enemy in this case being students from the University of Liverpool. This method proved that individual members of these rival organizations would join together in upholding the reputation of the Settlement, and in so doing would forget, for the time being, at least, their dividing prejudices.

Drama can supply the third illustration. Members of all parties, sects, groups and ages, whatever the colour of their label, joined in preparing for the summer pageant play.

One incident in the Pageant of English Literature stands out in my memory. During one of the intervals, a player characterising William Morris was observed walking up and down the lawn arm in arm with a player dressed as Matthew Arnold. When it is realized that "William Morris" was a noted local communist, and that "Matthew Arnold" was the Liberal candidate for the Borough it will, I think, be granted that drama can serve as a useful agent in bridging gulfs, and in drawing together in friendship men and women of

diverse points of view and so aid the growth of the community spirit.

BOOKS AND READING

Books are necessary to the process of education. Great books lead the individual out from his limited world into a larger life of knowledge and understanding. "When I read Homer," said Bouchardin the French sculptor, "I feel twenty feet high." This is the effect of a good book, it quickens and expands the self. Given the right attitude of mind, the greater the book the deeper is the response: the reader finds he has acquired new experience. This is the process of education. It has two requirements: the provision of books, and an attitude of mind in the student. The latter is generally present. Were there no desire for a more abundant life, the individual would not be at the Settlement.

The relation of the tutor to this aspect of the process is that of guide to, and through, the literature of a subject. In this, he gives a service which no library can give: it is the service the University tutor gives to his students.

We were fully aware of the importance of providing books and facilities for reading in any centre professing adult education, and the acquisition of a library was in our minds from the start. Here, perhaps, I may

indicate the steps which led to its opening. Our first contact was with the Borough Public Library which took what in those days must have been a unique action in lending a quantity of books to Beechcroft, making it in effect a temporary branch library. A permanent loan of the collection of books belonging to the Liverpool Ruskin Society was an additional help, and a grant for book purchase was received from the Hodgson Pratt Memorial Fund. Gifts were also made by private individuals, so that we had an excellent beginning.

By the second session 800 volumes available for borrowing were housed in the Settlement, and a year later saw the addition of 100 others. The memorable year was 1919, when the late W. C. Stapledon offered to furnish a room for use as a library and reading-room. This was formally opened a session later with a book stock of 1,800 volumes.

Bibliographically we were on our feet, and in case of any query whether adequate use was made of these gifts, a reply is at hand. The following paragraph appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* of December 19th, 1923:—

"A visitor to the Settlement happened to be in the library for ten minutes one evening, and during that time the following books were taken or returned by unemployed men. The list shows the seriousness of their reading, but

also reveals an element of almost sardonic humour. It runs:

Unemployment, A Social Study	Rowntree and Lasker.
The French Revolution,	Belloc.
Life,	Savage.
The Talisman,	Scott.
The Evolution of Modern Capitalism	Hobson.
Great Expectations,	Dickens.
Principles of Political Economy,	Mill.
News from Nowhere,	Morris.
Utopia,	More.
The Freelands,	Galsworthy.
De Profundis,	Wilde.
The Republic,	Plato.
Lives,	Plutarch.
Descent of Man,	Darwin.
The Devil's Paw,	Oppenheim.
The Revolt in Canada,	Porritt.
The Disappearance of the Small Landowner,	Johnson.
A Tale of Two Cities,	Dickens.
An Enquiry into Socialism,	Kirkup.
Other Men's Minds,	
A Shorter Working Day,	
The Life of Nelson,	Southey.

For more advanced students, use was made in 1918, of the Central Library for Students and the transformation of this institution into the National Central Library suggests that in future there should be closer co-operation between the Educational Settlements and

their local public library. The public library can help not only with advice in the organizing of the Settlement library, but by linking up the Settlement students with the huge national book borrowing system of which the dynamic centre is the National Central Library.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

If there are persons left who believe that the University Tutorial Class is the only type of adult education worthy of the name, or who hold that adult education is limited to formal classwork, I am not of their company. The Tutorial class may be the apex of an ascending series, but many of the lower levels have intrinsic value. It depends upon one's theory of education. There are individual powers of a high order which may be developed outside of any formal class system. I have in mind those capacities of organization and administration which, while not usually classed as intellectual, nevertheless induce qualities of mind to flow through and support them. Powers of this nature are often quickened into life by what may be termed Social Activities. Under this title one would include committee work and also recreational clubs.

The Students' Association, for example, was founded

to evoke student responsibility for the Settlement as a whole. An elected executive committee undertook the inception and administration of all social activities connected with the institution, managed the Library, and appointed each year a certain number of members to the governing Council of the Settlement. In this way, initiative and responsibility were liberated with resulting benefit to the institution, and increasing confidence in the individuals concerned.

This by no means exhausts the subject as one example out of many will show. Mrs. A was the wife of the first chairman of the Students' Association, but unlike her husband, she was not a Settlement member. House proud, and with two children to look after, her life was entirely absorbed in domestic affairs. While glad of her husband's membership of Beechcroft, nothing would induce her to join. Efforts to this end were made, for it was our policy to encourage husbands and wives to unite in membership, but without success. Apparently, there was some feeling about not being intellectually up to the level of the women's classes about which she had heard. When the day came for the formal opening of our home-made hard tennis court of which the initiation as well as the actual laying was mainly due to Mr. A, the wife was present. After the official opening someone placed a racquet in Mrs. A's hand and told her to knock the tennis ball over the

net. From that stroke, the conquest was made. Some inhibition was broken down, Mrs. A joined the tennis club, found the other women members no more high-brow than she, and finally became a member of the Settlement. But the meaning of the story has yet to be disclosed. Mrs. A had such unusual latent capacity that shortly, and without question, she was given the direction of all catering arrangements and, before the term was through, was recognized as a natural leader in the sphere of women's work. She was loved by all. At her funeral, the whole membership of the Settlement turned out to the memorial service, thus acknowledging the influence they were losing.

Without the tennis club, Mrs. A would not have joined the Settlement, and without Beechcroft, it is doubtful whether a sphere would have been found for the exercise of her great gifts. Her creative powers would have remained latent.

If the education of youth could be facilitated by football, here was an instance of the late flowering of an unusually fine character through the instrumentality of a Settlement sports club.

CHAPTER V

BEECHCROFT AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

THE MINISTERS' FELLOWSHIP

This account so far has been confined to activities undertaken for the student members of Beechcroft: there were yet external institutions which might be quickened by the new centre. Those with which we were most concerned were the three teaching agencies, the Church, the School and the Press.

As to the first, advantage was taken of a visit by the Rev. Malcolm Spencer, Secretary of the Free Church Fellowship, to gather in conference representatives of the Anglican and Free Church Fellowships together with individuals from denominations not covered by that movement. At this meeting in 1914 was formed the Christian Political Fellowship, soon to find a more simple title in the Beechcroft Fellowship.

It was a remarkable group consisting of clerical and lay members from every branch of the Church save that of the Roman Catholics. Its stimulating gather-

ings were noted for the quality of the leadership. For the first two years, the group benefitted by the broad-minded and able presidency of the Rev. R. G. Parsons, now Bishop of Southwark. His successor, for a like period, was the late Dr. Stanley A. Mellor, a strong and fearless character with an acute mind. The Rev. Principal Howard, of St. Aidan's Theological College, a man keenly alive to all social problems, followed as chairman for the next five years, and in 1923 he was succeeded by the scholarly Rev. H. Bulcock of Prenton Congregational Church.

The object of the Fellowship was to draw together members of the various sections of the sundered Church for the discussion of Christian principles and their application to the social and political fabric of civic and national life. The programme of 1921-22 will serve to indicate the range of topics discussed.

Sept. The Christian Ideal for Society.
The Right Rev. J. E. Mercer, D.D.
Oct. The Fundamental Principles of a Christian Society.
Rev. Stanley A. Mellor, B.A., Ph.D.
Nov. Christianity and Private Property.
Rev. A. J. Humphreys, B.D.
Jan. Christ in Modern Thought.
Henry Goodenough.
Feb. The Christian Attitude towards Competition,
Rev. Edward Harrison, M.C.

Mar. The Place of Compromise in an Imperfect Social Order, Horace Fleming.
May The position in India,
Rev. E. C. Dewick, M.A.

THE EDUCATION CLUB

The second teaching agency was that carried on under the auspices of the Local Education Authority. The School system then comprised Elementary, Higher Grade, Secondary, and Special Schools (some of these categories have since been changed), but the way in which Beechcroft could be of use was, for some time, not clear. It was obvious that the social and other gulfs between the various grades of schools were too wide for existing bridges, and that men and women teachers had few, if any, opportunities for the joint discussion of common problems. Consultation with a few key people produced evidence of the soil being right, and it was decided to form an Education Club which, it was intended, should be a centre of fellowship and inspiration for teachers of either sex and from all kinds of schools.

There were in the Borough 35 schools, of which 20 were non-provided, and 696 teachers of whom 133 were men and 563 women. This number was too large for the Settlement to deal with in its own rooms, so

that two kinds of meeting were planned: a discussion group for a selected few of the keenest spirits we could find, and a series of public lectures for the general teaching membership.

The inaugural meeting, in July, 1920, was notable for an inspiring address by Miss F. A. Collie, M.A., of the Education Department of the University of Liverpool, and from the start the Club was a success, both in the smaller group meetings and in the larger public gatherings.

The first of the public lectures had an audience of 500, and the average attendance for the remainder of the series was 350. It looked as though a need had been met. An important factor in the success of these lectures was the suitability and popularity of the speakers as will be seen from the first list which included, A. S. Neill, Dr. J. Lewis Paton, Sir Henry Miers, Dr. Cyril Burt, Dr. Albert Mansbridge and Sir Alan Mawer.

The discussion meetings were useful in enabling a smaller number of people to get to grips with subjects of everyday teaching importance, and to form new friendships. The syllabus for 1921-22 will indicate the range and type of subject.

Sept. Practical Methods in Psychology,
(*a*) Mental and Scholastic Tests,
Cyril Burt, M.A.

Sept. (*b*) Dull and Backward Children, Cyril Burt, M.A.
Oct. (*c*) Temperamental Deficiency and Juvenile Deliquency. Cyril Burt, M.A.
Nov. Co-Education, E. Sewell Harris, M.A.
Jan. The Value of Art to the Individual. Miss Nesta Lewis.
Jan. The Government Report on the Teaching of English, S. W. Jones, M.A.
Feb. The Emotional Development of the Child, Miss Lloyd Davies, M.A.
Feb. Visit to the University Department of Education. Address by Prof. Campagnac.
Mar. The Drama as an Educative Factor. Miss E. N. Fowler.
April Social Evening.

THE PRESS

The Press was the third institution for influencing the public mind and to this our thoughts were also directed. As early as 1908, long before Beechcroft was thought of, I had arranged with the editors of the two local newspapers, the *Birkenhead News* and the *Birkenhead Advertiser*, for the insertion of a weekly column of Adult School Notes. With the opening of the Settlement this arrangement was transferred to the new venture, and a column appeared regularly reporting the main activities of the previous week, including a

summary of the most notable of the public lectures. By this means, information about adult education got across to numbers of people who for various reasons were unable to get to the Settlement.

In addition to the public Press the private Press was utilized as an educational instrument. A Settlement journal, the *Crofter*, appeared in 1916, and while its publication, depending on a voluntary editor, was not always regular, a sufficient number of issues appeared to make the venture mentally stimulating. Its circulation was intentionally domestic, but it was passed on by students to friends many of whom were induced by it to join as members.

Under this heading also, must be included the several pamphlets published by the Settlement between 1919 and 1923, the last three being addresses by the Warden, and now only of historical interest as the earliest statements in print of the principles and policy of an Educational Settlement. These issues were as follows:—

A Settlements Association. A plea for the formation of a Federation of Educational Settlements. 1919.

A Pageant of English Literature, by J. W. Parkes. 1922.

Education through Settlements. An address given at the tenth Annual Conference of Educational Associations, University College, London. 1922.

The Philosophy of Settlements. An Address delivered at the

International Conference of Settlements, Toynbee Hall. 1922.

Adult Education: *Its Meaning and Significance.* An Address given at the Annual Meeting of the Educational Settlements Association, Leeds. 1923.

Relationships between Beechcroft and Church, School and Press were local. During this decade the Settlement reached out for further contacts and became the northern office of two important educational movements, the Seafarers Education Service, and the World Association for Adult Education, both initiated by that originating genius of adult education movements, Albert Mansbridge.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL SERVICE

THE STUDENTS

THERE were several questions relating to Social Service which concerned the Settlement. Are students of the working class socially minded? Had Beechcroft any success in training its members for more efficient social work? Were the studies in the various classes too abstract to affect the immediate life of the community; and lastly, was the Settlement able, in any way, to stimulate outside bodies to study social questions? Each of these queries will be dealt with in turn.

As to the first, a few complaints were made by the usual type of self-centred critic that Beechcroft was withdrawing men and women from social activities; was immersing them in the classroom, and making them socially and politically innocuous. This did not tally with our experience, and in 1920 we arranged for a census of some of the classes to be taken. The follow-

ing facts emerged as to the leisure time occupations of the students:—

Industrial: Eight were delegates to the Trades and Labour Council. Three were presidents of Trade Union Branches, and other T.U. Branches were represented by one chairman and one secretary.

Co-operative Society: Four were members of the committee of the Political Council. Two were on the management committee. The education committee was represented by three, Guild secretaries numbered three, and four others were members of Guild committees.

Civic: One woman Magistrate. Two members of the Board of Guardians. One member of the Birkenhead Libraries Committee. One on the Health Insurance Committee: two on the Profiteering Committee: two on the Juvenile Employment Committee; and one on the Juvenile Advisory Committee. One Poor Man's Lawyer; and one member of the Liverpool Council of Voluntary Aid. The number who served as Borough Councillors, and occupied the Mayoral chair are referred to in Chapter II.

Education: Eight were members of the Birkenhead Advisory Committee. The Workers' Educational Association was represented by three vice-presidents, one treasurer, and two members of the District Council. The National Council of Labour Colleges supplied one of its class secretaries. The Adult Schools had as students, five presidents, seven secretaries, and one member of the committee of the Mersey District Adult School Union. Also, there were five delegates to the Council of the W.E.A., and the Association of Schoolmasters had one secretary.

Political: One chairman and two secretaries of Political Parties. One president, one secretary and two committee

members of the Women's section of a Party. One vice-chairman and two members of Ward committees.

Church Work: Sunday Schools were represented by one superintendent, four teachers and one pianist. There were also one member of Children's Services committee, and one delegate to the Free Church Council.

Friendly Societies: One treasurer of the Ancient Order of Foresters, and one member of committee of the Girls' Friendly Society.

Temperance: Three were members of the Birkenhead Vigilance Committee, and one was member of the B.W.T.A. committee.

Recreational: The Allotments' Association was represented by two of its secretaries. There was one president of a Camping Association; one Football club committee member; one vice-president and one treasurer of a Bowling club; two members of the Juvenile Recreations Committee; and one student on the committee of the Merseyside Recreation Scheme.

THE UNEMPLOYED

There were about 10,000 unemployed in Birkenhead in 1922, and Settlement workers were wishful of finding some means of helping. In those days unemployment was not looked upon as being more than a temporary evil. It had not become chronic, and efforts to meet it had not the quality which later experience was to bring. Beechcroft being an educational institution was bound to attempt something along educational

lines, though our first effort could not be considered a success. Our error lay in thinking of the rank and file of industrial workers as being on the same intellectual level as the Trades Council members of our week-end lecture schools. We did not allow sufficiently for the depreciation in power of concentration which invariably accompanies unemployment.

This first attempt was a course of Extension Lectures. Arranged through the Oxford University Extension Delegacy, with the help of the Rev. F. E. Hutchinson, it met with the approval of the Extension Board of the University of Liverpool, and of the Mayor of Birkenhead who formed an influential committee to foster the course. Eight lectures were given in the lecture hall of the Corporation Central Library, lent for the purpose by the Libraries Committee. The subject, The Relations of England with the Rest of the World, was ably dealt with by Jocelyn Proby, B.A., of Magdalen College, but the audience, numbering about sixty to start with, was not equal to sustained attention, and the attendance declined until there were fewer than twenty at the final lecture. The experiment was of value, however, in providing evidence of the practical sympathy of the civic authorities, and of the generous interest of Oxford University.

The next attempt, in the same session, was on much more simple lines and met with immediate

success. It happened as follows:—I was enabled to attend a meeting of the unemployed organization when I told those present about Beechcroft and inquired whether there was anything that institution could do to help during the workless days. If they would like a meeting of their own at the Settlement, I stated they could select any day of the week and any hour of the day or night. A meeting was agreed upon, and Sunday evening at six-thirty was chosen as a convenient time. The arrangement of programme was left with me, and for the first meeting we prepared for an attendance of from 50 to 60. Judge of our amazement however, when the inaugural evening came, to hear the tramp of many feet as though a battalion were marching up the garden path. About 250 men in column of fours formation marched into our largest lecture-room which at a squeeze would seat less than 100. There being no room for chairs, the meeting was held standing, and we promised better arrangements for the following week.

Friends came to the rescue, more chairs and an additional piano were bought. Extra cups and saucers were purchased, for coffee is a great aid to fellowship, and on the succeeding Sunday we had four large rooms occupied, and held a two hours meeting in each, on Adult School lines.

This meeting was held continuously during the

remainder of my Wardenship, though the attendance did not remain as large as when the meeting was a novelty.

In addition to the Sunday gathering, several week-night classes were arranged for members, the men asking particularly for English Industrial History, and a Parliamentary Debating Society.

HOUSING

The query as to whether studies at the various classes held in the Settlement were too abstract to affect the life of the neighbourhood may be answered by reference to the work of the Birkenhead Housing Inquiry Committee. The purpose of this committee is revealed in its title, and the results of its work were remarkable whether considered from the angle of social service, or of education.

As a piece of social service, it united men and women of different political and religious affiliations in an effort to eradicate slums and liquidate the housing shortage. The effectiveness of its work may be judged from the fact that by the end of 1924 it had reported 1,603 houses to the Local Authority as being unfit for habitation.

From the other aspect, it educated individuals

through investigation and inquiry, and formed public opinion by means of open meetings, lantern lectures, and correspondence in the press. It not only awakened public interest; as its work gathered momentum, public feeling became deeply stirred. Facts as to housing shortage, overcrowding, insanitary conditions, and in certain areas, the entire absence of domestic amenities, and the effect of these on social and family life, made a deep impression.

The Housing Inquiry Committee while not actually a Settlement committee was closely associated with it. Its birth took place in December, 1922, at a meeting of the Birkenhead Vigilance Committee whose secretary and inspirer was also secretary to Beechcroft. He and the Warden acted as joint secretaries to the new committee which had amongst its members several Beechcroft students. The Committee held its meetings at the Settlement; and it may be said that the awakened public interest in Housing, without which the Committee could not have come into being, could be traced to earlier investigations carried out by Settlement folk.

As far back as 1909, a group of Adult School members had met at my house to study John Burns' Housing Act of 1908. This was replaced by a larger group in 1911 whose object was the reporting of unfit houses under that act. When its secretary, F. Naylor, was returned as a member of the Borough Council and was

placed on the Health Committee, he was able to speed up the official investigations of the houses reported.

Whatever the origin of local interest in housing, and however useful the association of Beechcroft students with the investigations, the effectiveness of the Inquiry Committee must be placed to the credit, not of the Settlement, but of the leadership of its joint secretary, P. W. Shone.

THE STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

An illustration of how Beechcroft was able to serve outside bodies may be given by reproducing one of the programmes arranged by the Settlement for the University of Liverpool branch of the Student Christian Movement. This body engages in the study of social questions as part of its normal work, and in 1920 the first of a series of annual lecture school week-ends was held at Beechcroft. The school was open to members of the Student Christian Movement connected with the northern Universities, and was well attended. Where Beechcroft was able to help was in the direction of the studies and in provision of suitable speakers; the aim being to make the week-end more practical than academic by inviting as lecturers men and women who could speak from direct experience.

The arrangements for 1921 are typical:—

Birkenhead Trades Council Lecture School
with Professor O. Elton as Lecturer

Group for the Study of International Relations

"The Challenge of the Industrial Situation to Students at the Civic Universities."

(*a*) How the difficulties of the present situation affect me.

Workers.

An Engineer, T. Findlay.
A Worker's Wife, Mrs. Councillor Smith.
A Shop Salesman, George Jones.

Employers.

A Cotton Broker, J. H. Ziegler.
A Manufacturer, A. H. Lee.

(*b*) The Application of Christian Principles to the Present Situation,

Rev. Principal Howard, M.A.

(*c*) What can we do?

Rev. H. Dallimore.
Horace Fleming.

CHAPTER VII

ADMINISTRATION

GOVERNMENT

At the opening of Beechcroft it was not easy to predict its ultimate affiliation. Its development from a private house into a public college was simple in comparison. Being the first institution of its type, Beechcroft was without official moorings. To which body should the Settlement belong? The Educational Settlements Association was not then in being. Pressure was brought to bear from two sources: one that it should become the adjunct of a political party, the other that it should become the local home of a national educational movement.

The gravitational pull was not without strength, but in spite of financial and other difficulties the pressure was resisted. It became more clear each month that an institution existing for the furtherance of higher education must not be tied to any body whose educational aims might be limited by political considerations. My

own hope was that Beechcroft might become the first of a number of extra-mural arms of the University which would colonize the territory covered by the University with permanent centres devoted to adult education.

This possibility was in mind when the first governing Council was formed in 1917. Its formation certainly made concrete the relationship which had been growing up between the Settlement and the University and other civic bodies.

As to the University, this friendliness was shown in many ways. It found expression in the active interest of its two Vice Chancellors who held office during the period, the late Sir Alfred Dale and the late Dr. J. G. Adami, an interest which has been continued by their successors, I am glad to report. Members of both senior and junior staffs were unfailing in their support and the direction of the Settlement was voluntarily undertaken by Professor E. T. Campagnac during my nine months absence in 1918-19.

When formed, the Council consisted of representatives of the following bodies:—

University of Liverpool.
University Extension Board.
University School of Social Studies.
Local Education Authority.
Birkenhead Trades and Labour Council.

Mersey District Adult School Union.
Birkenhead Workers' Educational Association, together with several individuals interested in adult education.

The first chairman was the late Wm. C. Stapledon, who was followed by Professor Campagnac. He in turn was succeeded by present holder of that office, H. Graham White, M.P. for Birkenhead.

In the earlier years the Council acted in an advisory capacity; it was not until 1924, when my wife and I left, that it became formally the governing body. It must not be thought however, that the establishing of a Council, and the emergence of the Settlement as a public institution, meant the institutionalizing of its work. An atmosphere of freedom and fellowship pervaded the house, while a high educational standard was maintained.

Any statement about the government of Beechcroft would be incomplete without some reference to the Students' Association. This body, founded in 1921, was given the right to appoint three of its members to the Council, an arrangement which enabled students to share the responsibility for policy and finance. This also provided a satisfactory method whereby the Council was kept in touch with the wishes of students, and a useful channel for communicating the Council's decisions to the general student membership.

It should perhaps be said here that while official connexion with the adjacent University seemed the desirable final relationship for an Educational Settlement, reasons, financial and other, emerged in practice which made this course impracticable. A way out of lonely isolation was found instead by the formation of the Educational Settlements Association of which more will be said elsewhere.

FINANCE

The question is often asked how Beechcroft was financed. It is one to which a direct answer is difficult. Distinction must be made between capital expenditure on property and fittings, and maintenance costs plus tutors' fees.

As to the first, there were several stages in the fabric history of the place. The original semi-detached house was secured by three individuals who held the property as trustees and from whom I rented it. For the first few years therefore, Beechcroft was little more than the Warden's private dwelling with the ground floor rooms used for educational purposes. Growth in membership necessitated expansion, and the next stage was reached in 1919 when a generous friend presented the adjoining house and garden. With the party wall cut through

the Settlement was now housed in a fine stone building standing detached in its own grounds. My wife and I continued in residence as we considered this essential to the development of those personal contacts which are so important in the work of Educational Settlements. The final fabric stage was the erection in the garden of a hall capable of seating 350 people.

Each of these stages presented its own problem of finance, especially as each addition to the premises required an increased amount for maintenance.

Towards purchase of the original house the sum of £1,238 was received from private donors between the years 1914 and 1920. Included in this amount there was one splendid gift of £500, and two others of £100 each. The remainder was in comparatively small sums. This total did not cover capital requirements, and a largish amount for interest on mortgage had to be found privately.

The Hall with its useful stage for dramatic productions was built in 1923 entirely out of gifts, and loans free of interest, from students and their friends. The initiative for this venture must be credited entirely to T. Arthur Stephenson, who then had succeeded to the chairmanship of the Students' Association.

Maintenance costs were eased by the Wardenship being honorary; even so, the amount required was substantial. For the two first years the source of income

was three-fold: students, subscribers and Trade Unions. These were implemented in 1916 by the Joseph Rowntree Trust which made a grant of £180 a year for three years. This amount was increased later, and while it appears under the name of the Educational Settlements Association which by then had come into being, it is certain that without the support of this Trust, which has done so much for adult education, the continuance of Beechcroft would not have been possible.

The students have invariably borne their share of financial responsibility. I looked into the figures from this angle in 1923, and ascertained that the proportion of income attributable to them during that year was 41½ per cent of the total.

Trade Unions making contributions during those early years included the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Enginemen and Firemen, the National Union of Railwaymen, the Postal Workers' Union, the Plumbers' Union, the Trades and Labour Council, together with the Co-operative Education Committee and the Co-operative Guilds.

As to grants from Statutory bodies, it should be remembered that much of the educational work undertaken during the initial years was of a pioneer kind that did not fit into the framework of the Regulations of the Board of Education which were then

operative, and made the success of an application for maintenance grants either to the Board or the Local Education Authority more than doubtful. This does not mean however, that the quality of the work done was inferior to the standard of other classes which were grant earning. Evidence in support of this may be found in the specimen syllabuses set out in the Appendix.

ORGANIZATION AND RECORDS

It was not until several years after the Beechcroft period when engaged in Settlement work in Bloomsbury, that I found, in the London County Council, a Local Authority sufficiently progressive to make a substantial contribution towards the cost of administration. Elsewhere, conditions press hardly on these new institutions whose aim and total activity is confined to education, and one hopes that in future Regulations, the Board of Education, which among its own functions includes administration, will make provision whereby some of the work outlined below may be covered by grants.

In addition to the work of teaching, preparation for teaching, the supervision of classes, and the planning of policy, which must be undertaken in every educational

institution, there are a number of not unimportant activities which are essential to efficient running. They are classed under the heading of administration, are costly as regards time, and are not State aided.

There is first the building fabric and its care: repairs and decorations, lighting and heating, all requiring constant attention if depreciation is not to run up alarming costs. Catering needs also, must be economically met or serious financial deficits may ensue. Income and Expenditure items require almost daily watching, and the greatest care taken in keeping accounts.

From the angle of the students: classes must be organized, attendance registers kept, tutors appointed, grants secured where possible, opportunities for social intercourse arranged, and time found for inquiries and individuals with personal difficulties.

On the side of propaganda and publicity: Press reports and advertisements must be written, printing arranged, correspondence dealt with, and filing and records kept up to date.

The keeping of records monopolizes time and when finished seems a superficial occupation. It is important however, both from the point of view of the history of the institution, and as a means of checking development. Only those who have had experience know the heart searching caused by the appearance of a table of

attendance figures. Does it show that the general programme is what students are wanting? Is such and such a subject being dealt with in the most attractive way? What blanks in the syllabus need to be supplied? Questions of this nature are constantly confronting a Warden.

It may be appropriate at this point to give the attendance figures of students at Beechcroft during the ten years:—

Session.	*Number of Meetings.*	*Attendances.*
1914-15	302	6,233
1915-16	202	5,631
1916-17	208	3,729*
1917-18	279	6,228
1918-19	397	7,716
1919-20	560	10,398
1920-21	520	12,304
1921-22	603	14,142
1922-23	769	20,080
1923-24	804	20,221

References to the individual students who made up these attendances have given some indication of the social types, but no details of occupation have so far been given. I take two classes from the records of 1917 which provide a fair sample. The first was a class in

* The Settlement was closed for two months owing to infectious illness.

Ethics, tutored by Professor Campagnac, for which 62 applications for membership were received. As the Regulations permit only 32 students for the first year of a Tutorial Class, two classes had to be formed. The following occupations refer to the first:—

Apprentice draughtsman, butcher, bookkeeper, handicraft teacher, housewife, postal official, Municipal clerk, munition worker, pharmacist, plumber, science mistress, shunter, shipwrights (2), shop assistant, teachers (7), telegraphist, wagon repairer, warehouseman, water inspector.

The other class for which details are given was one in Literature:—

Boiler smith, clerk, domestic science teacher, furrier, insurance agent, printer, ship's draughtsmen (4), shunter, stenographer, teachers (3), telephonists (2), typist, warehouse assistants (2).

PERSONNEL

It will have become obvious from the foregoing facts that the single-handed management of Beechcroft, coupled as it was with the daily responsibilities of business, had become almost impossible. Fortunately, the Joseph Rowntree Trust of York came to the rescue,

and made possible the appointment of a sub-warden, as earlier, the Thomas Wall Trust had financed the appointment of an organizer for women's work in the person of Mrs. Moore.

The first sub-warden was W. L. Terrett, appointed in 1920. He was followed by E. Sewell Harris, M.A., who, after two successful years, was succeeded by Stanley Tennant, B.A. By an arrangement of this kind it was intended to combine two purposes; the provision of help for Beechcroft, and a training experience for men likely to qualify as Wardens.

The questions of selection and training occupy the attention of the whole adult education movement, and have special significance for Educational Settlements where a variety of qualities are required owing to the comprehensive nature of the work. How is it possible to secure the teacher who will speak "as one having authority and not as the scribes": one in whom his teaching subject lives and is not merely deposited? They have to be found individually, but my impression is that young people with a sense of vocation rather than desire for a career are on the increase. In addition to vocation, certain requirements are essential. The tutor must be mature enough to have got beyond the text book formulæ of his teaching subject. He must be able to sit sufficiently loosely to see it in relation to the student, and present it in such a way that it awakens

an immediate response. Consequently, he needs to be young enough to be flexible in mind in order that his communication symbols and images may be within the experience of his class. This means a definite attitude both to student and to subject. He should not look upon the subjects in a syllabus as ends in themselves, but as gateways to understanding and to expansion of life. As to the students, he must have faith in the growing capacity of each, and realize that he is guide and leader rather than instructor. Finally, he must have experienced that his job is not to make his students like himself or like one another, but to help them to discover what is best in themselves.

The method of training adopted at Beechcroft was later taken over by the Educational Settlements Association which, aided by grants from the Thomas Wall Trust, appointed annually for several years, one or two bursary holders who were sent to appropriate Settlements for a year's training. This scheme finds reference in the Report on Pioneer Work published in 1929 by the Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education:—

"The Educational Settlements by their nature are able to give some training to prospective wardens and tutors, by the award of bursaries enabling such men and women to live at a Settlement for a year and to take part in the teaching and other activities of Settlement life. On this

point the evidence of the Settlements is illuminating. The value of this scheme, their evidence runs, is that a man or woman is tested before being given responsible work, and though no bursary has been given to any one who did not show some signs of being suitable, the period of work at the Settlement shows whether or not the individual has the temperament and is otherwise equipped for adult educational work. The Association, of course, does not consider this scheme, in its present form as adequate. It needs to be supplemented by some form of definite study, whether of psychology and teaching method, or of the history of adult education itself and its social background, or by further study of the subject in which the person concerned has graduated, from the special point of view of teaching these subjects to adults. This is a need which so small a body as the Association cannot very well meet by itself.

"If any such opportunity for further study and training is to be given, it should be after the year or two of actual experience such as the bursary provides, and not immediately after graduation."

It was not until the autumn of 1929, when I became Warden of Mary Ward Settlement in London, that it was possible to put into operation a more adequate scheme of training for resident graduates; but that is another story.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

GROWTH THROUGH EXPERIENCE

CHANGES have taken place at Beechcroft since 1924. Other Wardens have directed its affairs. The policy of the Educational Settlements Association allows each Warden, while respecting the tradition established by his predecessors, to have freedom to develop along the lines of his own educational interests. From this it follows that each Settlement differs from the rest, and that the work in any individual Settlement may vary from Warden to Warden. This makes for educational health in that nothing is standardized. Flexibility allows for experiment, and new experiments result in widened experience. Indeed, growth through experience may be said to be the theme running through all the activities of an Educational Settlement, and this for staff as well as students.

This widening of experience during the later years of the period under review shows Beechcroft diverging

from the principles laid down in the Guildhouse Report. This Report, resulting from an Inquiry undertaken at my request by the British Institute of Adult Education, visualizes different group entities using an Educational Settlement as a common home. This was the theory with which Beechcroft began, and is the view sketched in the 1919 Report of the Ministry of Reconstruction. Experience made clear however, that theory is often modified by practice. It happened in this case. We discovered that only on the basis of individual membership is the quality of fellowship possible which the educational aim of a Settlement requires. The trend definitely became one of concern for the individual rather than for the group. We found ourselves ceasing to think in terms of societies and movements; only in terms of individual men and women.

A SETTLEMENTS ASSOCIATION

Reference has been made to the need of associational support for new institutions like Beechcroft which were springing up in various parts of the country. This became a concern with Arnold S. Rowntree, of York, who, in 1919, instituted a series of monthly breakfasts to which Wardens and others were invited for the

discussion of Settlement problems. These led to an informal conference of northern Settlements, on October 12th, 1919, and this was followed by an official representative gathering at York on November 12th, 1919, when the Northern Settlements Association was launched. Seven months later, at a week-end conference at Cloughton, Yorkshire, the name was altered and the Educational Settlements Association came into being.

From such beginnings the present movement has developed. The E.S.A. now consists of twenty affiliated Settlements, seven residential colleges, and nine associated centres.

Each of the centres is autonomous, and each has made educational experiments along its own lines. The Association seeks funds from Trusts and from private individuals and allocates grants-in-aid to certain of its affiliated units. Despite this financial connexion, its relation to these units is that of advisor rather than controller. It is usually consulted in the appointment of wardens, but final responsibility rests with each Settlement Council. As a Responsible Body to the Board of Education it is concerned with the standard of teaching in the One Year and Terminal courses which it submits annually for tuition grants. This involves inspection and the approval of the appointment of tutors. It draws together in annual conference both wardens and students, and publishes a terminal

journal, *The Common Room*. It has provided book grants for wardens and travel bursaries both for wardens and students. It allocates bursaries to adult students wishing to enter one or other of the residential colleges, and in numerous other ways aids its member institutions and individuals. The main purpose of the Association lies in the progressive improvement in the quality of educational work throughout the movement by means of friendly influence, and by the pooling and interchange of experience.

The development of the Association is conditioned by two factors: finance and the supply of suitable wardens. Various attempts at training have been made, but the ideal method still awaits discovery. As to finance, the upkeep of Settlements, without aid for maintenance from statutory bodies, is bound to be difficult, and progress meanwhile depends upon donations from private sources. Obviously this cannot continue indefinitely and in any case is not satisfactory. Whether the movement in future is to be financially stabilized by State grants, or left to private generosity depends largely on educational policy. Public monies will flow to-us-wards only on the quality of our educational work, and if our methods justify the expansion of existing Regulations. The Association cannot give way on its theory of education, but declension should not be required.

It may be appropriate at this point to attempt a re-statement of aim.

THE AIM RE-STATED

The theory of education held in Educational Settlements owes much to Quaker tributaries (the earliest Educational Settlements were founded by members of the Society of Friends whose experience had been gained in the Adult School Movement). This theory is based on the belief that "man is the centre and shaper of his universe," that within him lie capacities and powers which, if developed, will enable him to create his new world, the character of which will be determined by the quality of the contribution made not by himself only, but by the whole human orchestra.

It follows that to holders of this faith, education is the foremost social activity, and the heightening of life the most urgent social service.

The purpose in these Settlements is the production of persons; not members of any particular party, sect or school of thought; but men and women who have achieved control of their instincts, are at home in the medium in which they work, whether it be of the intellect or of the hand, and whose imagination

enables them to see the highest use to which their powers may be put.

Towards the attainment of this aim, an Educational Settlement provides stimulus, training and opportunity. The object being the progressive development of the individual, both stimulus and training must be appropriate to the stage which the student has reached. He must first be separated from the crowd, enabled to stand on his own feet mentally and to realize that he is a person. He then needs training in habits of work and in self-discipline, the idea being to throw the student back on himself in order that he may build up an inner life in which he thinks for himself, reflects on his own experience, and learns to check that experience by the gathered experience of history. The peak of the educational process comes into view (it is never reached) when the individual breaks through the barriers of self-centredness and achieves a concern for what he conceives to be the social good: when he plumbs the depth of his own nature and discovers that the qualities in others which have quickened his best self, qualities like sympathy, understanding, tolerance and generosity, are the qualities he must exhibit in his own life if he would be of service to others; and when the realization emerges that the community life in the Settlement is a microcosm of the wider world and that the spiritual factors necessary to keep the one har-

monious and progressively stimulating are essential to the other.

It will be noted that these Peoples' Colleges are not community centres. They were the first to use this description, but it is not now correct. They are centres of community life. The community centre may be a meeting place for a variety of non-related social activities; the Educational Settlements are centres of a common life which the student helps to create, and in its creating learns to compare the institution with the needs it is attempting to meet. In so doing he becomes aware of a deepening sense of responsibility for the direction of his energies. One might go further and give expression to the hope, characteristic of the whole movement, that the influence of this common life and this deepened sense of responsibility will raise into consciousness an awareness of the basic unity of mankind, and the necessity, if the life of society is to be rich in content and harmonious in character, for the individual to project those values which have in them the power of knitting humanity into a conscious whole.

While expressing these hopes, one does not shut one's eyes to the danger which confronts this type—indeed all types—of democratic institutions; that of becoming rigid and stereotyped. Flexibility and freedom are essential if room is to be made for the individual initiative which these institutions are intended to

evoke, and also for the growing experience of members. Adult education in the class room needs to be supplemented by opportunities for various kinds of student expression, not the least of which is the government of the institution and its adjustment to a developing policy.

But this account must cease. On looking back, in the light of wider experience, much of the work now seems elementary, but as pointed out, there was no tradition to guide an experiment of this kind. The only way to new forms of educational truth was through trial and error. As I reflect, however, there comes into mind something of the Settlement life which no record can reveal; I refer to friendships formed, personalities developed, views widened and become more tolerant, sympathies grown more sensitive and kindly, responsibilities accepted and values changed. It is the memory of these things, and the people in whom they dwelt that makes the ten years at Beechcroft so full of interest for all who shared in its work, and so full of hope for those who long for the regeneration of society through the expansion of life of its members.

APPENDIX

Contents:—

Weekly Programme of Classes, 1923-24, pp. 103-04.

Specimen Programmes of Non-Grant earning classes:

(1) Women's classes, pp. 105-09.

(2) Mixed Discussion class, pp. 109-111.

Officers and Council for 1924, pp. 112-113.

List of Lecturers, pp. 113-115.

WEEKLY PROGRAMME OF CLASSES

SESSION 1923-24

MONDAY:

Play Reading.
Discussion Class.

TUESDAY:

Education Club.
Local History Society.
Women's Adult School.
Young Women's Adult School.
Young Men's Club.

WEDNESDAY:

Political Science (Tutorial Class), Prof. Raleigh Batt.
English Literature (Tutorial Class), H. D. Butler, M.A.
Social Psychology (Labour College Class), Prof. J. Johnstone.
Appreciation of Music, T. Pennyquick, B.Sc.
Photography.

THURSDAY:

Women's Afternoon Classes.
Junior Girls' Fellowship (1) Miss Bywater.
" " (2) Miss M. Seward.
Dramatic and Diction Class (W.E.A.), Miss Eva Fowler
Poetry Society.
Boys' Club.

FRIDAY:

International Affairs (W.E.A.), John S. Stephens, M.A.
Economics of Unemployment. Stanley Tennant.
Singing (W.E.A.). Mrs. W. E. Stelfox.
French, Elementary. Mrs. W. Moore, J.P.
French, Advanced. Mons. F. Rougeault.
Esperanto. E. G. Mawson, B.Sc.

SATURDAY:

Public Lectures.

SUNDAY:

Men's Adult School.
Lecture Schools.
Boys' Fellowship.
Evening Meeting.

SPECIMEN PROGRAMMES OF NON-GRANT EARNING CLASSES.

(1) Women's Afternoon Classes

session 1917-18

Local Government. (8 talks).

Women and Citizenship,	Councillor R. P. Fletcher.
The New Civics,	The Warden.
Education (Theoretical),	Miss E. McCrindell.
Education (Practical Administration),	Alderman R. J. Russell, J.P.
The Poor Law,	Miss E. McCrindell.
Poor Law Administration,	Chas. Wass, J.P. (Board of Guardians).
Public Health,	Miss E. McCrindell.
The Health of the Borough,	Dr. S. Marsden (M.O.H.)

Average attendance, 25.

Democracy in Ancient Greece (4 talks).

Miss Browne, (University of Liverpool).

Average attendance, 24.

After War Problems (4 talks).

Housing,	Miss Pearson (Victoria Women's Settlement).
Health,	Mrs. Hall (School of Social Science).

The Endowment of Motherhood,	Miss Mahler (Women's Industrial Council).
Co-operative Movements,	Miss Blackledge (School of Social Science).

Average attendance, 26.

Great Educational Reformers (4 talks). Miss F. A. Collie, M.A., (University of Liverpool.)

Pestalozzi.
Robert Owen.
Herbert Spencer.
Montessori.

Average attendance, 23.

Heroines of Fiction (4 talks), by Miss H. Kermode, M.A.

Florence Dombey	(Charles Dickens).
Maggie Tulliver	(George Eliot).
Mary Barton	(Mrs. Gaskell).
Jane Eyre	(Charlotte Bronte).

Average attendance, 24.

SESSION 1918-19.

Dickens (4 talks), by Miss H. Kermode, M.A.

Dickens the Humourist.
Dickens the Humanitarian.
Dickens the Master of Characterization.
" " "

Average attendance, 16.

Education (8 talks).

Co-operation between Parents and the Elementary Schools	Miss F. A. Collie, M.A.
The Medical Inspection of Schoolchildren	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,
Play, Recreation and Clubs,	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,
Some Features of the 1918 Act,	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,
Co-operation between Parents and the Secondary School,	Miss A. F. Edwards, M.A.
The Adolescent Girl,	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,
Training in Citizenship,	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,
Choice of Careers for Girls,	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,

Average Attendance, 15.

Session 1921-22

Great Books of other Lands.

Introductory,	Mrs. W. Moore, J.P.
The Iliad,	Mrs. M. T. Smiley.
Faust,	Mrs. C. W. Hall.
Don Quixote,	E. Sewell Harris, M.A.
Notre Dame de Paris,	C. W. Hall, B.Sc.
Resurrection,	Miss H. Kermode, M.A.
The Divine Comedy,	Miss A. F. Edwards, M.A.
A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur,	Morgan Williams.

Average attendance, 49.

Session 1922-23.

Ancient Greece.

The Glory that was Greece,	Mrs. M. T. Smiley.
The Greek at Home,	,, ,, ,, ,,
The Greek at Worship,	,, ,, ,, ,,

The Greek at War,	M. T. Smiley, M.A.
The Greek in Politics,	Mrs. W. Moore, J.P.
The Greek as Artist,	H. Goodenough.
The Greek as Thinker,	R. Kennard Davies, M.A.
Greek Influence in Modern Life,	Mrs. R. Kennard Davies.

Average attendance, 46.

Drama.

The Art of the Theatre,	Mrs. W. Moore, J.P.
Medea,	Miss H. Kermode, M.A.
Lady Macbeth,	Miss Eva Fowler.
Marguerite (Faust),	Mrs. H. Fleming.
Norah (Doll's House),	Mrs. Preston.
Major Barbara,	Mrs. Hugh Jones.

Average attendance, 46.

SESSION 1923-24

Music: Its Story and Meaning.

The Birth of Music,	Mrs. W. Moore, J.P.
Tribal Music,	Mrs. F. Rougeault.
Old Dance Rhythms,	,, ,,
English Folk Songs,	Stanley Tennant.
Elizabethan Love Songs,	Miss Owen Owen.
Handel,	Mrs. H. Fleming.
Beethoven,	,, ,,

Average attendance, 47.

Our Household Goods.

Evolution of the Home,	Mrs. H. Fleming.
Famous Domestic Interiors,	Mrs. W. Moore, J.P.
Old Needlework,	Mrs. Geo. Marples.
English Furniture,	H. Baldock.

My Mother's China Cupboard,	Miss Emmerson.
The Old Chimney Corner,	Mrs. Martin.
Pictures for Homes,	Mrs. W. Moore, J.P.
My Lady's Dress,	Miss I. Emmerson.

Average attendance, 47.

(2) Mixed Discussion Class

Session 1920-21

The Making of a New World.

The World in Transition,	Dr. Stanley A. Mellor.
The Organization of Society.	
1. *Economic and Industrial.*	
The Economic Foundations of Society,	Fred May.
The Organization of Work,	Sir Walter Citrine.
2. *Political.*	
Nations and States,	Prof. Lyon Blease, LL.B.
A Proposed Constitution for a New Commonwealth,	Prof. G. C. Field.
3. *Educational.*	
Education for Life and Work,	Prof. E. T. Campagnac.
Education of the Soul,	W. L. Terrett.
The Spirit of Society.	
The Spiritual Foundation of a New Society,	Dr. Stanley A. Mellor.
Adult Education,	Lord Gorell, C.B.E., M.C.
The Pursuit of Beauty: Art and the Creative Instinct,	Olaf Stapledon, M.A.

The Dynasts,	Prof. Lascelles Abercrombie.
The Pursuit of Happiness as the End of Social Life,	Dr. Stanley A. Mellor.
The Place of the University in a Democratic State,	Dr. J. G. Adami.
The Development of the Emotions,	Miss M. H. Lloyd Davies, M.A.
The Basis and Crown of a New Social Order; Religion as Faith and Contact with God,	Dr. Stanley A. Mellor.

Session 1921-22

Personal Life in the World of To-day and To-morrow.

Introduction.	
The Value of the Personal Life as a Factor in Progress,	Dr. Stanley A. Mellor.
The Psychological Basis.	
The Place and Worth of Instinct, Habit and Impulse,	Miss M. H. Lloyd Davies, M.A.
The Discipline of the Will and the Necessity for Ideals,	Prof. G. C. Field.
The Significance of Health and the Way to it—the Body, the Senses, Sex, etc.	Dr. Macalister.

Self-Education.	
Self-Education by Individual Effort,	E. Sewell Harris, M.A.
Reading and the Choice of Books,	Olaf Stapledon, M.A.
Can We all be Artists?	Miss N. J. Lewis.
Self-Expression.	
Self-Expression in Work,	Prof. W. Lyon Blease, LL.B.
Self-Expression in Character —the Life Beautiful,	Dr. F. H. Spencer.
Self-Expression in Social and Political Activity,	H. Graham White, M.P.

Session 1923-24

The Idea of Freedom.

The Idea of Freedom,	Dr. Stanley A. Mellor.
Freedom of Thought and Speech,	Prof. G. S. Veitch, D.Litt.
Personal Freedom: its Limits,	Mrs. W. Moore, J.P.
Freedom in Industry,	Prof. G. C. Field.
Freedom in Education,	C. W. Bailey, M.A.
Freedom in the Family,	H. D. Darbishire, LL.B.
Freedom in Social Life,	Prof. A. M. Carr Saunders,
Freedom in Political Life,	Moelwyn Hughes, M.A., LL.B.
Freedom in Religion,	David Paterson.
Freedom in Art,	William Penn.
Freedom in International Affairs,	Prof. W. E. Collinson.
Can Freedom be realized with equality?	Prof. Jas. Rice, M.A.

BEECHCROFT

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SESSION 1923-24

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Woolf, Leonard S.

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INDEX

(Of matters only, for personal names see pp. 112-115)

ADOLESCENTS, 37-40
Adult Schools, 14-17, 25, 26, 99
Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, 15, 19, 30, 87

BEECHCROFT, COUNCIL, 83, 84, 112
Curriculum, 41-46
Fellowship, 66-68
Finance, 85-88
Government, 82-85
The House, 18-20, 85-86
Journal, 71
Library, 60-63
Opening, 20, 21
Organization, 88-91
Publications, 71-72
Staff, 91-94
Books, 60-63

COMMUNITY SPIRIT, 17, 22, 57-60
Co-operative Education Committee, 16, 29, 87
Guilds, 24, 33, 87
Council, 83, 84, 112
Curriculum, 41-46

DRAMA, 36, 49-53, 59

EDUCATION CLUB, 68-70
Educational Settlements Association, 82, 85, 87, 93-98

FRIENDS, SOCIETY OF, 99

HOUSING ENQUIRY COMMITTEE, 78-80

INFORMAL EDUCATION, 37, 57-65
International Affairs, 45-46

JOURNAL, 71

LABOUR COLLEGE, 16, 58
Library, 60-63
Library, Birkenhead Public, 61, 76
Liverpool Ruskin Society, 61
University of, 15, 42, 43, 45, 59, 80, 83, 85
Local History, 46-48
London County Council, 88

MARY WARD SETTLEMENT, 94
Mersey District Adult School Union, 25, 84
Merttens, Frederik, Trust, 46
Ministers' Fellowship, 66-68

NATIONAL CENTRAL LIBRARY, 62-63
Union of Railwaymen, 27, 29, 87
Nursery, Day, 33, 35

OXTON ROAD ADULT SCHOOL, 15, 25

PEOPLES' COLLEGE, 14, 101
Personnel, 91-94
Plumbers' Union, 87
Postal Workers' Union, 87
Pratt, Hodgson, Memorial Fund, 61
Press, The, 70-72
Publications, 71-72

RECORDS, 89-91
Rowntree, Joseph, Trust, 87, 91-92

SEAFARERS' EDUCATION SERVICE, 72
Social activities, 63-65
Social service, 73-81
Staff, 91-94
Student Christian Movement, 80, 81
Students, 24-40, 63, 64, 73, 74
Students' Association, 17, 39, 63, 64, 84
Study Circles, 33-35

TRADES AND LABOUR COUNCIL, 16, 21, 27-31, 83, 87
Trades Unions, 15, 16, 22, 24, 27, 28, 30, 31, 58, 87
Tutors, 53, 92-94

UNEMPLOYED, 75-77

WALL, THOMAS, TRUST, 92, 93
War, 18, 19, 24, 41-44
Women, 32-37
Workers' Education Association, 15, 16, 22, 25, 58, 84
World Association for Adult Education, 72

YOUTH, 37-40

KT-765-300